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TWENTIETH CENTURY 4-H CLUB WORK

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A radio talk by R. G. Foster, Extension Service, delivered through a network of 45 radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Saturday, February 7, 1931.

I have chosen the subject "Twentieth Century 4-H Club Work" because I want every club member, leader and citizen listening to this program to realize that the 4-H club work is a modern movement. Its philosophy and methods coincide with the best educational ideals. Its achievements show increasingly the fundamental relation of its program to a permanent and progressive American rural life. Be proud that you are a member or leader in this great enterprise, helping to build solidly into our national life, a rural citizenship and leadership, having for its ideal "Better Farming, Better Business and Better Living" on American farms and in American rural homes.

Twenty years ago the first efforts to introduce improved farming methods met with much indifference and resistance. Many practical farmers were not easily convinced that the "new fangled" ideas of men from the Department of Agriculture and State Colleges would work. Cases are recorded where men had to be paid to put on a demonstration of a new practice on their farms.

Now please don't think that I am being critical of farmers when I re-cite this history. The indifference of farmers twenty years ago to teachings of science was the indifference that faces every person trying to introduce new methods to great numbers of people. Apparently it is ingrained in our cantankerous human natures to be slow to take up the new thing. And, probably, we are not much the worse off for being thus conservative. It saves us from a lot of crack-brained schemes.

Now here is the credit side to rural America. In this history of the past twenty years. Convinced, sometimes against their wills, but convinced, farmers and farm families today seek eagerly after the newer facts of science. In the van guard are 825,000 4-H club members with their 80,000 local volunteer leaders. You club members and leaders constitute a modern trend in rural life. You are pressing the scientists to find out more adequate methods of farming and homemaking, to dig up more facts, to guide the right solution of the intricate problems of modern farm life and of working together in modern farming business and community life.

With all the enthusiasm of young people you are surging forward. But I want to ask you today to pause just for an instant in your impetuous rush and ask yourselves where is our club headed? What do we want our club to do for us and for the folks in our neighborhood?

Now, not because I am an all-wise person, but just to challenge your thinking and to get you started on making your own answers to these questions let me conclude this well-meant sermonette by listing for you some of the things I think your club is doing if it is a twentieth century 4-H club.

(over)

First of all, your club is helping its members to recognize their opportunities. It is giving the boy members a guide to go by in choosing farming or some other life work by showing them the possibilities of these lines of work if followed energetically and efficiently. It is helping the girl members to know whether their interest lies in modern farm family life or in some other environment.

Second, if your club is a twentieth century club it is developing in you the habit of success by completing whatever you begin. There is no other habit more essential.

In the third place, your twentieth century 4-H club is teaching you how to work with other people; how to give in gracefully to a better idea than your own; how to hang on tenaciously and work persuasively for the adoption of your own better idea.

Fourth, your twentieth century 4-H club is training you for leadership. It is helping you to see quickly what needs to be done, and to act boldly to accomplish it.

Fifthly and finally, your twentieth 4-H Club is working to keep on the farms of your community young men and women who stay because of intelligent choice and who are well fitted for their great undertaking of farming, home-making, and community building.

Now, perhaps you can think of other yardsticks that you believe are better suited to measuring the work of your club. I don't maintain that I know all of them nor have expressed all of them today. I should like to hear from you older club members and leaders about your ideas of the goals of your club. And if you want to get my suggestions for the objectives for a twentieth century club I should be glad to send them to you.

Many thanks for your attention, and good-bye